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INCOMING TELEGRAM *Department of State*

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC
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S E C R E T SAIGON 2728

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Joan Izumbo DATE 10/5/81
RDS ☐ or XDS ☐ EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. REASON(S)
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKING 1985 AUG 4 AM 11 00
DECLASSIFIED ☑ RELEASABLE ☑
RELEASE DENIED ☐
PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS
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E X D I S

AUG 4

REF STATE 18808

1. I AM AWARE OF THE SKEPTICISM TO WHICH YOU REFERRED IN YOUR PARA 5 AND, UNDOUBTEDLY, SOME OF IT IS SINCERE AND IN GOOD FAITH, BUT I ALSO THINK THAT SOME OF IT IS RATHER FISHY. THIS IS A POOR LITTLE BEAT-UP COUNTRY IN THE MIDDLE OF A DEADLY WAR, WHICH, UNIQUE AMONG THE COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD, IS TRYING TO HOLD ELECTIONS IN WARTIME FOR THE FIRST TIME.

2. INSTEAD OF BEING SO UTTERLY SKEPTICAL - NOT TO SAY CYNICAL - IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THERE OUGHT TO BE SOME RECOGNITION OF WHAT A BRAVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE ATTEMPT THIS IS. I THINK WE SHOULD BE MINDFUL OF WHAT DR. JOHNSON SAID ABOUT A DOG STANDING ON HIS HIND LEGS: THE WONDER IS NOT THAT HE DOES NOT DO IT WELL; THE WONDER IS THAT HE DOES IT AT ALL.

3. I BELIEVE AN AFFIRMATIVE ATTITUDE BY THE DEPARTMENT AND THE EMBASSY HERE MAY WELL HAVE A GOOD EFFECT ON JOURNALISTS AND OTHERS AND MAY MITIGATE THE SKEPTICISM IN THE U.S. AND INTERNATIONALLY. THE SEMINAR ON ELECTIONS, WHICH ENDED AUGUST 3 AND ON WHICH WE HAVE REPORTED SEPARATELY, SHOULD HELP IN THIS REGARD.

4. WE SHALL FORWARD NAME OF PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL EXPERT IN NEXT FEW DAYS WHEN HABIB HAS RETURNED.

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5. CONCERNING "STRUGGLE" CANDIDATES, THE LISTS ARE IN FACT CLOSED AND OF COURSE THE ABSENCE OF STRUGGLE CANDIDATES IS DUE ALMOST ENTIRELY TO THE "STRUGGLERS" UNWILLINGNESS TO PRESENT THEMSELVES AS CANDIDATES. WE KNOW OF ONLY ONE "STRUGGLE" LIST OF TWO MUNICIPAL COUNCILORS IN DANANG WHICH WAS DISQUALIFIED. AS THIS IS BEING WRITTEN, CENTRAL ELECTION COMMITTEE IS MEETING IN SAIGON, REVIEWING CASES OF THOSE CANDIDATES WHO WERE DISQUALIFIED ON THE PROVINCIAL LEVEL AND WHO HAVE APPEALED THEIR DISQUALIFICATIONS. IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT SEVERAL DISQUALIFIED CANDIDATES WILL BE RETURNED TO THE LISTS FOLLOWING THIS REVIEW.

6. AGREE THERE IS MUCH ADVANTAGE IN ADHERING TO PRECISE

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TERMS OF ELECTORAL LAW AND IT APPEARS TO US THAT THE GVN HAS DONE SO. WE ARE NOT AWARE OF ANY ADDITION OF CONCEALED CRITERIA IN ORDER TO GET AT INDIVIDUAL CANDIDATES. OUR INFORMATION INDICATES THAT ALL OF THOSE DISQUALIFIED WERE DISQUALIFIED IN REFERENCE TO PRECISE TERMS OF THE ELECTORAL LAW. AVAILABLE DETAILS FOLLOW BY SEPERATE TELEGRAM. LODGE
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